ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISE AND AGRITOURISM: FARMING FOR PROFIT AND SUSTAINABILITY TOOL KIT

TABLE OF CONTENTS and ABSTRACTS

For

I. ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISE AND AGRITOURISM INTRODUCTION

Recreation and Tourism Policy, Objectives, and Responsibilities. NRCS General Manual, 190-ECS, 1997

<u>Alternative Enterprises: For Higher Profits and Healthier Land</u>. Brochure, NRCS. Call 1-888-LANDCARE to order.

<u>Grazing Lands Enterprise Diversification.</u> Brochure. NRCS. Call Larry Butler at 817-509-3220

<u>Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism: Farming for Profit and Stewardship.</u> by James A. Maetzold, The paper provides definitions and a list of 150 plus alternatives. It is available on the RESSD web site.

<u>Alternative Enterprise and Agritourism: Farming for Profit and Stewardship.</u> NRCS Information Sheet. This a 4-page information sheet and a shorter version of the above paper. Additional copies can be made or ordered by calling 1-888-LANDCARE.

<u>Resource Conservation and Development: Partnerships Serving America's Communities.</u>
A brochure. Call 1-888-LANDCARE for copies.

Agritourism Alternative Enterprises, Conservation, Sustainability and Partnerships For Farms, Ranches and Rural Communities. NRCS. Paper addresses alternative enterprises and agritourism definitions, natural resources sustainability, agritourism sustainability and partnerships. Call Jim Maetzold at 202-720-0132 for copy or go to the RESSD web site www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm.

<u>State Partners</u>. CSREES. This is the online directory of land-grant universities which are state partners of the Cooperative State Extension, Research, Education and Extension Service. This lists the professional workers in agriculture including those in agritourism and alternative enterprises. Go to www.reeusda.gov/statepartners/usa.htm

<u>Small Farms Resource Guide, USDA CSREES</u>. A state by state listing or contacts, programs and other resource material. To order the guide go to: www.reeusda.gov/smallfarm.

<u>Making Your Small Farm Profitable</u>, Ron Macher, publisher of Small Farm Today, Storey Books, Schoolhouse Road, Pownal, VT 05261, Cost \$19.95. Call 1-800-441-5700

or go to www.storey.com. This book discusses 25 guiding principles, development of new crops and new markets and maximizing net profit per acre. Planning, management and 44 enterprise budgets which livestock, poultry, crops, fruits, and vegetables. It also contains a guide on equipment costs, operation costs, etc for budgeting purposes.

<u>Recreational Opportunities in a Changing America: An Expanding Role for SCS.</u> Video, Copies will be loaned by RESSD, NRCS. Call James A. Maetzold, 202-720-0132 Video presents several success stories of how the natural resources can be conserved but yet used in an alternative tourism enterprise.

<u>You Can Farm: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Start and Succeed in a Farming Enterprise</u>. by Joel Salatin, Good Earth Publications, 1702, Mountain View Road, Buena Vista, VA 24416, or call 540-261-8775 at \$30.00 a copy.

<u>Small Farm Today: The Original How-to Magazine of Alternative and Traditional Crops, Livestock, and Direct Marketing.</u> Published bi-monthly and subscriptions cost \$21.00 per year. Telephone 800-633-2535. The Small Farm Today was founded for and is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of small farming, rural living, sustainability, community, and agripreneurship. The October/November/December 1999 issue included feature articles on greenhouses, turkeys, hogs, miniature herefords, herbs, dry beans, oxen and market gardening plus 24 other articles and numerous pages of advertisements, classified, breeders directory and other reference material.

<u>AgVentures</u>, published bimonthly, cost \$21.00 per year. Telephone 888-474-6397. The magazine publishes articles on livestock, crops, aquaculture, niche markets, wildlife, herbs and other topics. The articles are based on actual alternative enterprise success stories. Good resources are identified at the end of each article. It contains a classified section, advertisements and a breeders directory.

Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism Resource Manual. It is a 200 page manual that contains about 75 pages of resource experts and web sites about alternative enterprises and agritourism. Papers on recreation trends and agritourism opportunities are also available in the manual. Copies can be obtained by calling James Maetzold at 202-720-0132 or email jim.maetzold@usda.gov or going to the RESSD web site www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm

<u>Small Farm Digest, USDA, CSREES, Small Farm Program.</u> Free, Telephone 202-401-6544. Articles on USDA activities, small farm success stories, small farm studies, and calendar of events. Go to www.usda.gov and click on small farms.

Some major web sites include:

www.sare.org
www.attra.org
www.your state extension and/or department of touris
www.tia.org

January 30, 1997

GENERAL MANUAL (GM) 190-ECS AMENDMENT 5 (PART 409)

SUBJECT: ECS - RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY, OBJECTIVES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose. To transmit a newly revised Part 409 of GM Title 190.

Effective Date. This part is effective as of this date.

Explanation of Changes. Part 409 of GM-190-ECS on Recreation has been amended and updated. The term tourism was added to expand the scope of our education/information assistance opportunities in this area. This amendment clarifies organizational responsibilities for considering recreation and tourism alternatives in our natural resources planning activities. The changes are needed to reflect the reorganized agency structure and functions associated with recreation and tourism policy.

The authority to develop and maintain this policy is shared by the Resource Economics & Social Sciences Division and Biological Conservation Services Division, at the national level. This revision included a comprehensive review which incorporated input from selected personnel in states, regions, institutes, and other divisions.

This policy can also be retrieved electronically from the NRCS homepage by selecting NRCS Operating Policy. Next, click on general manual, then ecological sciences, and scroll to Part 409.

Filing Instructions. Replace the outdated version of Part 409, dated Nov. 1983. Insert Part 409, pages i through 409-4.

ERRY HAMMOND

Director

Resource Economics and Social Sciences Division

Enclosure

DIST: GM

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is an agency of the Department of Agriculture

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(190-GM, Amend. 5, January 1997)

PART 409 - RECREATION AND TOURISM POLICY, OBJECTIVES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

409.1 (c) (5)

409.0 Purpose.

This section addresses the policy, objectives and responsibilities of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in carrying out the mission of the agency with regards to land, water, and related resources for outdoor recreation and tourism.

409.1 Policy.

- (a) It is the policy of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide technical and, when authorized, financial assistance to individuals, groups, and units of government to plan natural resource conservation systems in relation to recreation and tourism activities. Recreation and tourism are acceptable uses of all natural resources.
- (b) Recreation and tourism considerations are an integral part of natural resource planning. Such planning is provided in accordance with the National Planning Procedures Handbook, National Watershed Manual and other pertinent directives.
- (c) Within the scope of this policy, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has responsibility for:
- (1) Determining the suitability of land and related resources for proposed recreation and tourism use in keeping with natural resource capabilities and proper conservation treatment;
- (2) Planning recreational use and treatment of land, water and related resources to minimize erosion and maintain the productive capability of the natural resource base while ensuring safe and enjoyable recreation and tourism opportunities in the future;
- (3) Planning and monitoring the installation of conservation measures to facilitate prudent recreational use of soil, water, plants, animals, and air;
- (4) Establishing and using proper recreation and tourism and other practice standards in selecting and applying natural resource conservation measures and in ensuring uniform technical quality of these measures;
- (5) Providing technical assistance with operation and maintenance of recreation and tourism activities to ensure conservation of natural resources; safe and beneficial operation; and effective use of public funds, when applicable; and

(190-GM, Amend. 5, Jan. 1997)

409.1 (c) (6)

(6) Developing and maintaining appropriate information in all sections of the Field Office Technical Guides (FOTG).

409.2 Objectives.

The primary objectives of outdoor recreation and tourism related to the conservation of natural resources are to:

- (a) Provide technical assistance to landowners, primarily on private and nonfederal public lands, in recognizing and, where appropriate, developing recreation or tourism opportunities on their lands within the capabilities of natural resources and that meets the needs of the local residents and landowners;
- (b) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to maintain or improve economic conditions and life styles within the local area through existing or potential recreation or tourism opportunities;
- (c) Use current conservation technology to ensure that natural resource conditions are maintained or improved as a result of planned recreation or tourism activity;
- (d) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to ensure that new and existing recreation and tourism enterprises utilize the conservation treatments necessary to sustain the supporting resources; and
- (e) Ensure that planning activities consider the identification of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities that are consistent with the wise use of natural resources.

409.3 Means of accomplishing objectives.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service will cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to:

- (a) Inform land users, managers, and developers about the need to evaluate the potential recreation and tourism opportunities;
- (b) Use current, technically sound procedures in planning and applying natural resource conservation practices and measures on lands used for recreation or tourism;

(190-GM, Amend. 5, Jan. 1997)

409.4 (a) (1)

- (c) Propose recreation as an alternative to more intensive land uses if the resource base is deteriorating under present use when recreation is a feasible alternative. Identify recreation and tourism opportunities that complement the existing on-farm enterprises and may result in multiple benefits, such as:
 - (1) Additional income to the landowner and/or local economy;
 - (2) Increased wildlife management;
 - (3) Enhanced water quality;
 - (4) Increased soil and water conservation;
 - (5) Maintenance and enhancement of natural ecosystems; and
- (6) Social benefits such as increased knowledge of natural resources and agriculture.
- (d) Establish and maintain effective working relations with Federal, State, and local agencies; educational institutions; tourism groups; and private organizations involved in planning, developing, managing, operating, or maintaining outdoor recreation or tourism;
- (e) Provide appropriate training to agency personnel in planning, evaluating, developing, managing, and conserving natural resources used for outdoor recreation and tourism and in relating recreation and tourism to other disciplines in all agency programs;
- (f) Evaluate the economic impact and benefits of new and additional recreation and tourism opportunities could have on the local residents and natural resources; and
- (g) Cooperate with the recreation and tourism industry to inform their customers on the benefits of conservation of natural resources.
- 409.4 Responsibilities.
- (a) National Headquarters.
- (1) The National Technical Guide Committee will establish national practice standards for outdoor recreation, tourism, or related activities. Recreation, tourism, and related activities will be included in other national practice standards in the purposes, condition where practice applies, criteria, and consideration sections, where applicable;

(190-GM, Amend. 5, Jan. 1997)

409.4 (a) (2)

- (2) National recreation and tourism practice standards will be supported by technical policy leaders, and
- (3) National technical leaders will provide liaison with other agencies, groups, and individuals.

(b) Regional Offices.

Periodic review and assessment of recreation and tourism activities will be conducted in the states.

(c) State Offices.

States will modify national practice standards as needed to meet state and local resource needs and test proposed national standards to ensure adaptability and suitability.



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

AE-1

Alternative Enterprises – For Higher Profits, Healthier Land

What Are Alternative Enterprises and Agritourism?

Alternative enterprises and agritourism allow farmers and ranchers to earn higher profits by replacing or supplementing traditional farm operations with innovative, sustainable on-farm or on-ranch ventures.

Alternative enterprises and agritourism can take many forms. They can:

- produce food and fiber or have little to do with agriculture,
- produce new or unique crops or livestock or add value to traditional agricultural products,
- rely on traditional farm practices or use alternative methods, such as organic systems,
- be labor- and resource- intensive or require few inputs,
- operate either seasonally or year-round,
- produce fun, recreation, and education- or naturebased agritourism.

But they all have a common theme: farmers and ranchers rely on the natural resources on their land – the soil, water, air, plants, wildlife, and scenery – to keep their family on the farm and the farm in their family. They also require sound land care. Since the land's resources generate income, conserving those resources makes good business sense.

Which Alternative Enterprise Might Be Right for Me?

A lot goes into determining what type of enterprise is most appropriate for you. But first you must assess the natural resources on your farm or ranch, as well as your personal and financial resources. Here are a few questions you should consider:

Land Use: How much land do you own or have access to and how is it being used? Farms with wooded areas may be well suited for mushroom production or hunting. Operations with open areas may make good sites for public events. Fallow

cornfields may be rented out for goose hunting. Pasturelands could be used to graze alternative livestock, such as goats, poultry, or bison.

Land Features: What does your land look like? Does it have scenic views? Rolling hills? Interesting geologic features, like caves or glacial features? Land that is unique or visually appealing may provide income opportunities from activities like hiking, horseback riding, nature tours, or hayrides. Land with water features could be used for fishing, duck hunting, canoeing, and other water sports.

Land Location: How close are your neighbors? How close is your marketplace? Being located too close to people may limit some enterprises, like hunting. But access to nearby markets may be required for other ventures, like pick-your-own enterprises.

Soil Type: What are the characteristics of your soil, and what is it best suited for? Soil capability should factor into your decision.

Farmstead Features: Are there historic buildings or other historic features on your property that might serve as tourist attractions? Is your farmhouse well suited for a bed and breakfast? Are there buildings that could be modified for use as conference or banquet facilities?

Climate: What is the average temperature, rainfall, or snowfall in your area? Will you need to irrigate?

Wildlife: Is there abundant wildlife on your property that could support recreation like hunting, fishing, and bird watching?

Financial Resources: Do you have access to loans or other sources of capital? Some alternative enterprises have high start-up costs, while others require little upfront investment.

Other Resources: What are *your* talents, skills, and interests? Are you, or are others in your family, good

at particular crafts such as woodworking, quilting, or knitting that you could teach or demonstrate? Do you enjoy working and talking with people?

Are there others – family members, neighbors, community groups – you can team up with on an alternative enterprise?

How much labor can you provide or do you have access to?

What Else Do I Need To Know?

Business Planning

Any new venture requires a well-developed business plan. You'll need to do the following:

- assess your resources,
- research market and business conditions,
- identify your customers and competitors,
- set your business development and financial goals,
- research and comply with any rules and regulations (discussed below),
- · arrange financing,
- · develop a marketing plan, and
- implement your business plan.

Rules and Regulations

Alternative enterprises often pose new legal challenges that traditional farming operations don't face. You'll need to research whether your potential enterprise will require any of the following:

- special permits, including zoning, building, vendor, environmental, and other permits;
- compliance with health and environmental regulations, fish and game rules, building codes, tax remittance on sales, and other local, state, and Federal regulations;
- legal agreements to use other private or public property;
- liability or other insurance.

Where To Get Help

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program and its Sustainable Agriculture Network have developed and compiled information on planning, developing, and marketing different types of alternative enterprises. SARE also offers grants for research and education on alternative production and marketing systems. See http://www.sare.org on the web or call the SARE program at (202) 720-5203.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help you conduct a natural resources assessment. To locate the NRCS office nearest you, look in your phone book under "U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service."

For a national listing of alternative enterprises and agritourism liaisons, see http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RESS/econ/ressd.htm.

Resource Conservation and Development Councils, coordinated by NRCS, can also help you get started on alternative enterprises. To locate the RC&D Council that serves your area, contact your nearest NRCS office or see http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/RCCD/rc&dstate.html on the web.

Cooperative Extension

Your local Cooperative Extension Service can help you locate resources and expertise on alternative enterprises and business development. To find the Cooperative Extension office nearest you, look in your phone book under "County Government, Cooperative Extension."

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)

ATTRA offers extensive information on initiating and maintaining successful alternative enterprises and provides links to other organizations that can help you. See http://www.attra.org on the web, or call (800) 346-9140. ATTRA also provides useful information on marketing and evaluating alternative agricultural enterprises. ATTRA is sponsored by USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

Farming Alternatives Program (FAP), Cornell University

FAP has produced a step-by-step workbook, Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises, to help you plan and evaluate a new enterprise. It can be ordered by calling FAP at (607) 255-9832. Also see http://www.cals.cornell.edu/dept/ruralsoc/fap/fap.html on the web.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA provides information on planning, financing, and marketing your new business, including a small business "start up kit." SBA may also be able to help you develop a business plan and with other aspects of launching an alternative business. To locate

the SBA office nearest you, look in your phone book, under "U.S. Government, Small Business Administration," see http://www.sba.gov on the web, or call 1-800-UASKSBA.

Other Resources

For information on the local and state business climate, contact your local Chamber of Commerce. For information on starting and marketing your own tourist or recreation enterprise, contact your state department of tourism or your county or city convention and visitors bureau. Trade associations for specific businesses, such as the National Aquaculture Association, North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association, the American Pastured Poultry Producers Association, the American Bed and Breakfast Association, and many others, may be able to give you additional guidance.

Examples of Alternative Enterprises

FEE-BASED OUTDOOR RECREATION

Recreation derived from the natural resources on farms and ranches can provide new income opportunities for landowners. However, these types of enterprises require careful resources management to stay viable. The following are some of the activities that can be offered to the public for a fee:

Access to water bodies, natural areas, scenic sites, etc.
Archery
Bird watching or nature photography
Fishing or hunting
Ice-skating and sledding
Outdoor games (laser tag, paint ball, golf)
Swimming, inner tubing, canoeing
Rock climbing/rappelling
Scenic trails (for horseback riding, cross country skiing, hiking, or snowshoeing)
Picnicking and camping

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

If you are offering for-fee recreational services or are located in areas where outdoor recreation is popular – near trout streams, hiking trails, state and national parks, etc. – you may wish to consider offering rental of the following types of equipment:

Binoculars, sighting scopes, tripods Boats, canoes, kayaks, inner tubes Camping, fishing, or hunting equipment Snowshoes, toboggans, cross country skis

ALTERNATIVE CROPS and VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

Growing high-value, non-traditional crops, raising specialty livestock, or providing farm-related services can provide farmers and ranchers with supplemental income. The following list includes just a few of the items or services farmers and ranchers can grow or develop on their land to generate income:

Alternative livestock products

Goats (meat, milk, cheese, soap)
Llamas and alpacas (wool or breeding stock)
Free-range livestock
Pastured poultry and livestock
Rabbit

Bison, elk, and deer

Aquaculture (fish, clams, shrimp)

Bait (minnows, worm farming)

Canned, dried, smoked, or other preserved goods

Craft sales (dried flowers, wreaths, furniture)

Firewood

Flowers or herbs

Fruit or nut orchards

Christmas trees

Guide service for hunting, fishing, or pack trips

Horse boarding

Mushrooms (shiitake and others)

Nursery products (shrubs, annuals, nursery stock, etc.)

Organic produce

Straw (pine straw and others)

ALTERNATIVE MARKETING

There are a number of innovative ways to market crops that you already grow or those that you wish to grow. These marketing techniques can increase your share of farm and ranch sales.

Pick/cut-your-own (fruits, vegetables, flowers, Christmas trees)

Rent-a-tree, berry bush, garden, or flowerbed Community-supported agriculture Direct marketing

> Internet sales to distant buyers Farmers' markets

Roadside sales

Direct selling to schools and restaurants

PUBLIC EVENTS and PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

Farms and ranches can make ideal settings for local fairs and festivals and other community events. You can offer your farm or ranch as the event site for a fee and offer goods for sale during the event for extra profit. You can also offer programs that help people reconnect with the land. The following are

types of events or participant experiences that urban dwellers and others may wish to participate in:

Bonfires

Clam bakes

Corn or tall grass maze

Dances

Farm school for children and adults

Festivals and fairs

Anniversary festivals

Blossom or harvest festivals Cultural or ethnic festivals

Music festivals

Heritage festivals

Food gathering (fruit, nut, mushroom, flower picking)

Rock or gem gathering Garden plot rentals

Guided nature walks

Haying or other harvest experiences

Hay/sleigh/tractor rides

Historic interpretation or reenactments

Outdoor plays and concerts

Pumpkin carving

Petting zoo

Rodeos, roundups, horse shows

Syrup making

Tours of wildlife and fish habitat conservation projects

HOSPITALITY SERVICES

Because of the serenity they can provide, farms and ranches are increasingly being sought out for lodging and other hospitality services. Here are a few of the services that some farms and ranches are providing:

Bed and breakfast

Cabin rentals

Child care

Catering for events held on your farm or ranch

Meeting and conference facilities for business and pleasure

Country weddings Company retreats Family reunions Church picnics

Farm/ranch vacations (cattle roundups, chuck wagon

meals, cattle drives)
Pet boarding/training

Youth camps

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The farmstead is increasingly becoming a desirable location for demonstration or instruction of crafts and traditional rural activities. The following are some of the skills that imaginative farmers are sharing with the public:

Cattle roping, branding

Cooking, canning, wine making, syrup making, smoking fish and meats

Cow/goat milking

Crafts (woodworking, rug hooking, quilting, knitting, wool spinning, weaving, soap making, flower arranging)

Flour milling Gardening Grain threshing Lumberjack skills

Organic food production

Plant identification

Sheep herding (sheep dog demos)

TOURISM

Tourism generates income not just from entrance fees but also from food, crafts, and other souvenirs offered for sale. The following list includes different farming and ranching operations the public may wish to tour. To attract more tourists, farmers and ranchers may want to join with other producers and innkeepers in their communities to offer tours of multiple operations (a fish farm, a flower farm, a llama operation, a ranch, etc.) and other rural attractions for a package price.

Bird/wildlife preserves

Cider mills

Farm/ranch buildings

Fish farms

Flower and herb farms

Specialty livestock operations (angora goats, llamas, dairy)

Food processing facilities Historic sites or buildings Hydroponics operations

Maple syrup production facilities

Orchards Saw mills

Traditional farms and ranches

Wineries

For additional copies of this information sheet, AE-1, call

1-888-LANDCARE or see the website at

http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda/RESS/econ/ressd.htm.

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Agritourism Alternative Enterprises, Conservation, Sustainability and Partnerships For Farms, Ranches and Rural Communities 1/

By James A. Maetzold National Agritourism, Recreation and Alternative Enterprise Leader, NRCS

Introduction: This paper discusses—Why Agritourism? What is Agritourism? What are the Agritourism, Recreation and Alternative Enterprise Opportunities? What is Sustainable Natural Resource and Agritourism? and What are the Agritourism and Conservation Partnership Possibilities for Sustainability?

Why agritourism and recreation on farms, ranches, and in rural communities? Agritourism has the potential as a vehicle for preserving and sustaining family farms, ranches, rural communities, and conserving the natural resources. Agritourism enterprises and activities can provide additional income to farmers, ranchers, and the rural community. (Mahoney) It can provide the additional supplemental revenue that can make a difference between a profit and a loss for agricultural producers, agri-businesses and the rural community. It is a way to "add value" to crops and livestock currently grown on the farm or ranch. It also has the potential for building current relationships and expanding future relationships between agriculture and tourism supporting industries.

Many of the natural resource conservation programs enhance the natural resources and rural landscapes that are cherished by rural, suburban, and urban tourists. Agritourism provides many rural, urban and suburban tourists with the opportunities for enjoyment and direct contact with agriculture and the natural resources. Getting back to the agricultural heritage roots and nature-based recreation experiences is a major tourist trend today. (Rach, and American Recreation Coalition)

Integrating tourism into current agricultural food and fiber product operations is a way for a farm or ranch to "grow" and supplement its income as well as increasing the recreation diversity for the public. Agritourism can "jump start" tourism development with relatively little initial investment at the farm, ranch or community level. It is a people to people business. It can begin by just changing the method of production, marketing or making another use of natural resources other than just production agriculture. Agritourism is a unique enterprise that generally requires a small amount of money, but is normally labor intensive. To build an agritourism enterprise, is a process of investing a small amount—build and learn, invest a small amount—build and learn, invest...etc. (Cool) Agritourism can also be developed to attract tourists during off-peak farm

^{1/} This paper builds on a report prepared by Edward M. Mahoney, Daniel M. Spotts, and John V. Edwards titled "Developing Agriculture and Natural Resource Products

Tourism by Sustaining and Enhancing Partnerships," Unpublished report prepared for Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA, 1999.

and ranch work periods such as blossom time, maple syrup processing, and summer/autumn festivals or during peak periods such as fruit and vegetable U-pick enterprises and harvest festivals.

What is agritourism or alternative enterprise? This word has several meanings as it includes tourism, agriculture, people, products, and conservation. It is also called "alternative enterprise" and "enterprise diversification." Agritourism is defined by some as any business or activity that invites visitors to come on to a farm, ranch or into a rural community to enjoy agriculture and the natural resources. (Kuhen, et al) It is generally an additional or "alternative enterprise" that has been added to the farm or ranch. It can also be a value-added alternative enterprise that increases the value of the current food and fiber crops or non-traditional agriculture production or marketing. For a community, it is a new tourism or recreation activity that is designed to attract tourists. It is any activity that is beyond the traditional food and fiber production or marketing agree-business system of the area but it is agriculturally, natural resource or cultural/heritage based. This is also called "rural economic development."

In agritourism and alternative enterprises, farmers, ranchers and the rural community utilize the same natural resources--soil, water, animals, plants and air and people—that are used to produce food and fiber, but use them for agritourism, different products or different marketing methods.

What is Tourism? It is defined by the commercial tourism industry as any recreation that occurs when a person travels more than 100 miles from home to participate in a recreation activity. (TIA) Thus, tourism is outdoor or indoor recreation, pleasure travel involving the direct purchase of farm products, farm stays, crafts, tours, festivals, indoor/outdoor learning, scenery, walking/hiking, skiing or other nature-based outdoor or natural resource based recreation experiences. If it is not a 100-mile trek, it is not tourism.

This causes a serious problem for agritourism when it comes to evaluating agritourism business alternatives. Agritourism cannot be limited to the 100 miles criteria for rural America tourism because the majority of all agricultural, nature-based, or natural resource-based recreation tourism and income is derived from the local county residents. Research findings estimate that about 75-80 percent of the income is from local residents for the basic on farm, ranch or local community tourism or value-added activity. For the rural community and especially the Natural Resources Conservation Service, agritourism means any agricultural or natural resource/cultural/heritage-based-income-producing recreation or value-added enterprise or community activity regardless of the distance traveled by the tourist.

What are the different recreation or value-added alternative enterprises? Alternative enterprise activities are either natural resource consumptive or non-

consumptive. In most cases, agritourism recreation or value-added enterprises are nonconsumptive or renewable such as fruit trees bearing fruit every year, birds returning every year, and the scenery changing with the season. Also, agricultural food and fiber crops being planted in soil, using conservation planning and practices, that sustain the soil which is nourished by annual rainfall.

Figure 1 shows 14 different categories of agritourism alternative enterprises that can occur on the farm, ranch, or in the local community. These are: farm markets and specialty products; product processing; fairs, festivals and special events; horses and other farm animals; unique dining experiences; wildlife and fish; adventure; floriculture; education; heritage/culture/ethnic; arts and crafts; farm/ranch stays; tours and touring; and pick/cut/gather/grow your own. (Mahoney)

Table 1 contains over 150 agritourism and value-added alternative income producing recreation enterprise activities for the farm, ranch or rural community. (A number of these enterprises can be found in Chapter Nine "Enterprise Diversification" of the NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook.) Each of these enterprises provides the opportunity to develop a number of spin-off recreation enterprises that tie into the tourism-related business enterprises. Many tourism and recreation activities/attractions on a farm, ranch or in a rural community can be linked to other "value added" enterprises such as direct marketing, roadside stands, U-pick, selling of ice cream/cheeses, decorated food baskets, crafts, farm dining, fresh and processed meats/vegetables/jams/jellies, syrup, wines, at farmers' markets, roadside stands or on the farm. This tourist traffic also translates into other tourism businesses such as shops, hotels, motels, restaurants, gas stations, repair shops and other services in the community.

Agritourism and Natural Resource Sustainability—Sustaining the natural resources through conservation is a major consideration during the development and operation of tourism and alternative enterprises as it is with traditional food and fiber production. For many of the alternative enterprises, the organic production, processing and distribution of food and fiber are a primary consideration. It makes good sense and it is USDA's policy. USDA Secretary's Memorandum 9500-6, "Sustainable Development" (September 13, 1996) commits USDA to work "...toward the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of diverse food, fiber, agriculture, forest, and range systems." It calls for USDA to balance goals of improved production and profitability with the need for stewardship of the natural resource base and ecological systems and the need for vitality of rural communities.

Natural resources and cultural landscapes will continue to be dominant tourist attractions in most rural areas as tourists continue to pursue their interest in nature-based recreation and agritourism. It is important to conserve, protect, and enhance these natural resources that tourists enjoy. Long-term rural agritourism sustainability depends upon maintaining the quality of the nature-based environment that includes a sustainable and productive agriculture. The following are features of (1) natural resource sustainability and (2) agritourism sustainability.

- 1. Natural Resource Sustainability--Sustainability is defined by the United Nations as..."The use and management of the natural resources (soil, water, animals, plant and air) in a way that it does not limit the options of future generations." The major elements of natural resource sustainability are productivity, stability/resilience, maintenance of resource asset, and equitability as shown in Figure 2.
- 1. Productivity—For consumptive type recreation enterprises such as recreation wildlife hunting and fishing, or crop and animal production for farmer's market, the natural resources' maintain the ability to restore themselves after use. This includes the ability to replenish the wildlife, restore the soil, and ensure that water quality is not impaired and that the rural scenic beauty of the rural landscape is maintained. The same holds true for the non-consumptive enterprises such as campgrounds, horseback riding, on farm or ranch stays. These are a few examples of sustainability. This means the resource is used within the resource capacity while maintaining capacity to perform other needed ecological functions as well as the agritourism functions.
- 2. Stability/resilience—The natural resources' use is within the resources' ability to remain stable in productivity and/or where the resources are depleted that can be built up. Consideration and allowance are made for multiple roles of the land and water resources.
- 3. Maintenance of resource asset—Substitution of non-polluting measures for polluting measures wherever possible (e.g. non chemical weed or pest management for chemical-dependent practices.) Non-renewable resources are used efficiently and substitutes that are renewable are found whenever possible. Water and energy are used rationally and economically. Preservation of biological diversity or enhancement of diversity in ecosystems that are in fragile condition or is not a fully developed ecosystem.
- 4. Equitability—The use and management of the resources today should be such that future options are not limited.

A strong sustainable feature of agritourism enterprises is the non-consumptive aspect of most enterprises or the enterprises' use of renewable resources. These features are discussed below under the opportunity for partnerships between natural resources organizations and agritourism.

The NRCS National Planning and Procedures Handbook provides the foundation for the conservation of soil, water, animals, plants and air natural resources for sustained use. These planning practices and conservation systems sustain the natural resource base when properly applied. This handbook is available in every NRCS district office.

Agritourism Sustainability—It consists of six essential elements—authenticity, fun, values, relationships, learning, and involvement as shown in Figure 3.

- 1. Authenticity—Tourists seek authenticity in their experiences on the farm, ranch, or in the rural community. Today's tourists are well informed, highly educated, professional, and know what they want and why they want it. They also have a sufficient amount of income to buy what they want and are willing to pay the cost to "experience" that diversity.
- 2. Fun—A tourist's definition of fun really depends on the age group. It is also influenced by what people "perceive" what the fun "experience" is to be. The customer expectation is the key. You need to know your customer.
- 3. Values—Tourists come seeking values, which are inherent in the authenticity and fun. They also come with their values about heritage, roots, ethnicity, environment, agriculture, etc. The media and other social influences have shaped many of the values. It is important to articulate and communicate the values of farmers, ranchers, and the rural community to correct any misunderstandings.
- 4. Relationships—Tourists want to leave with a sense of belonging or becoming a part of the experience themselves. They want to take a piece of the experience with them be it a craft, food, or knowledge, even a personal relationship with the people and the land or nature.
- 5. Learning—Tourists need to be informed and kept interested in the recreation activity. This is the part of sustainable tourism at which one teaches how conservation, agriculture and the environment work together to produce food, fiber, and recreation. This is also very dependent upon the age or age groups/customers that are participating. One needs to capture the learning techniques or styles familiar to the customer. This needs to be combined with entertainment or fun that includes farm/ranch buildings, families, heritage, rural culture and lifestyles.
- 6. Involvement—Tourists today have been involved through school, sports, television, and numerous local community programs. The sustainable recreation enterprise must consider the up and coming tourists' generations need for "adventure" and "experience" type activities. These people want to be involved rather than just viewing or driving by. These customers are the baby boomers of the 50's and 60's that want an "experience" rather than just being served.

Why build Agritourism, Non-Agricultural Recreation Industry Tourism and Conservation Partnerships? Natural resources are used by agritourism, non-agricultural recreation industry and production agriculture. How these natural resources (soil, water, animal, plants and air) are used depends upon their attributes such soil fertility, climate, terrain etc. The natural resource attributes for food and fiber production are soil fertility; rainfall, climate and water, which may be different from those, needed or used by agritourism and non-agricultural recreation enterprises. However, some of the natural resource attributes are used for both agricultural production and agritourism or other alternative enterprises such as U-pick, fee fishing and hunting, food processing, and numerous other food, fiber, and forest value added tourist products. The recreation-based

natural resource attributes unique to agritourism enterprises include: rural landscapes, scenery, nature quiet time, bird watching, rock climbing, horseback riding, hiking, or water-based activity to name a few. For other enterprises, all the attributes of the natural resources are used such as for farm or ranch stays, farm/ranch working experiences, and community blossom or harvest festivals. Many of these same natural resource attributes are also important to non-agricultural recreation industry enterprises. For example, non-agricultural recreation enterprises depend on special attributes such as ski slopes, waterfronts, nature-based retreats and remote convention centers. Thus, all agritourism, and non-agricultural enterprises are tied to the natural resources. To insure economic sustainability of the enterprises, there is a joint interest in environmentally sustaining the natural resources. This is accomplished through conservation partnerships.

A growing number of tourism and recreation businesses are recognizing the importance and potential profit associated with ecologically and culturally sensitive development and management. These businesses understand that tourism growth will increasingly depend on the public perception that the natural resources are being sustained and social impacts of tourism development have been minimized. The public's interest in environmental sustainability opens the door for conservationists to demonstrate the benefits of cooperative stewardship of natural and cultural resources as essential elements of responsible tourism development and use.

Conservation agencies and organizations provide the foundation for establishing these partnerships that cooperatively promote the conservation of the natural resources. These partnerships insure people can enjoy the tourism and recreation qualities of the conserved natural resources in a sustainable manner for the future. Agritourism can be the catalyst for forming these partnerships with tourism and hospitality businesses, rural community and conservation stakeholders. It is the common bond or link, which is shown by the shaded area across the top row of circles in Figure 4.

Farmers and ranchers have a long and successful cooperative track record with government conservation agencies, conservation/environmental organizations, and sport interests to conserve land, water and wildlife resources. A fully integrated partnership of agritourism, non-agricultural recreation, natural resource conservation organizations, and the rural community can also repeat this track record. Figure 4 shows how each of these industry areas work independently but also have a common area of interest, building on the common base of the natural resources (See the interlocking circles in the center of the page). Working together in this common area on natural resource stewardship makes sense because all the areas directly depend on the wise use of the Nation's natural resources and all four groups need strong partnerships to attract new members to sustain tourism and the natural resources.

Each tourism sector in Figure 4 has something to gain from and contribute to sustainable tourism and conservation partnerships. Agritourism has the potential to economically preserve family farms, and ranches. It also contributes by showing the many tourists that have limited direct contact with agriculture to understand what it does to conserve the natural resources. This can modify what tourists believe or perceive about agriculture and

its impact on the natural resources environment. This can differ radically from what they hear from mass media or some special interest groups. Agritourism offers the opportunity to educate business owners and tourists about the benefits of resource conservation.

Rural community's link to conservation (Figure 4) shows that it is important for communities to be concerned with conservation partnerships that sustain the natural resources. Rural tourism can also benefit from the preservation of farms' natural resource based industries, and rural landscapes that are fundamental to attracting a growing number of suburban and urban tourists. A growing number of tourism and recreational businesses are recognizing the importance and potential profit associated with ecologically and culturally sensitive development and management.

The non-agricultural recreation industry circle of Figure 4 plays an important role in community development and partnerships, as it becomes a major employer and important source of income in many rural areas. New recreation-based enterprises can partner with existing or expanding agricultural and natural resource businesses to contribute to overall economic diversification, growth and stability in rural areas. Permanent residents can benefit from tourist facilities and revenues that support local infrastructure, amenities, and the preservation of natural and cultural resources.

Agritourism attractions and experiences can also benefit rural communities and tourism businesses by increasing tourist's length of stay and local spending. Communities, agritourism and non-agricultural recreation industry partnerships supplement and/or complement each other's activities through harvest or blossom festivals, heritage, cultural, ethnic and other attractions. A common conservation ethic bond can foster other partnerships that promote the conservation friendly tourism/recreation enterprises for all the farms and ranches in the community. This results in stronger rural communities as shown in the box at the bottom of Figure 4. These conservation/tourism business partnerships will be extended to areas or groups in the community such as cultural, heritage and other resources to achieve overall sustainability for rural community.

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TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community

FOR-FEE RECREATION ACTIVITIES

- --Archery
- --Bird and/or wildlife watching
- --Bicycle racing/rentals
- -- Tricycle racing or maze for kids
- --Camping
- -- Canoeing/kayaking
- --Corn or tall grass maze
- -- Cross-country skiing
- --Firearm shooting-range or skeet
- --Fishing
- -- Grass sledding
- --Golfing
- --Go Carts
- --Hand gliding
- --Hiking
- --Horseback riding
- --Hunting, including guaranteed shooting of pen-raised small/large game on shooting preserves
- -- Ice skating
- -- Laser tagging
- -- Mountain biking
- --Mushroom/wild berry/plant/flower/rock/gem gathering
- -- Nature photography
- --Off-road/all terrain vehicle riding or driving
- --Paint balling
- --Picnicking
- --River/pond or lake tubing
- --Rock climbing/rappelling
- --Scenic trails (horse, motor, off-road vehicles, walking)
- --Snowmobiling
- --Snowshoeing
- --Swimming
- -- Tobogganing/sledding
- -- Turkey shoots
- --Walking/jogging/use of exercise trail

FACILITIES FOR PEOPLE

- -- Assisted living accommodations
- --Business meetings
- --Business picnics and reunions
- --Church groups
- --Club meetings
- --Country weddings
- --Family reunions
- --Heritage enactment
- --Historic train rides

TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community (continued).

- --Interpretive programs
- --Playground
- --Retreats
- -- Trails-foot, horse, vehicle, off road
- --Youth camps

PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCES

- -- Animal birthing
- --Barn raising
- --Dancing--ethnic
- --Farm/ranch vacations—branding, roundups, chuck wagons, haying, farming, cattle, drives
- --Farm school for kids
- -- Garden plot rentals
- --Grow your own fruit/vegetables/flowers/crops/Christmas trees/fish
- --Herbal medicine making
- -- Make your own old-time toys, clothes, Christmas decorations, and/or food dishes
- -- Make your own bread
- --Mushroom log seeding
- --Pick/harvest/cut your own fruit/vegetables/flowers/crops/Christmas trees/fish/firewood
- --Pond construction
- --Quilt making
- --Rent-a-tree, bush, garden, flowerbed, crop
- --River fording
- --Rug making
- --Wild West trail rides with bandits and Indians
- --Wildlife and fish habitat development—bats, birds, fish, snakes, insects, same game
- -- Trail rides including overnight

TOURS OF...

- -- Aquaculture operations
- --Bird sanctuary
- -- Conservation activities
- --Croplands
- --Culture
- --Cider mills
- --Ethic
- --Forest sites
- --Farm/ranch buildings
- --Food processing plants
- --Historic sites
- --Hydroponics operations
- -- Maple syrup production facilities
- --Orchards
- --Saw mills
- -- Scenic attractions
- --Wetlands and restoration
- --Wildlife and fish habitat
- --Wineries

TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community (continued).

DEMONSTRATIONS OF...

- --Bread making
- -- Cattle drives, roping, branding
- -- Cooking, canning, wine making, smoking fish and meats
- --Flour milling at home
- --Furniture making
- --Lumberjack skills
- -- Dairy milking technologies
- --Organic food production
- --Planting, harvesting, milking technologies
- --Quilt making
- --Rug making
- --Rural crafts (e.g., woodworking)
- --Sheep herding
- --Shrimp farming
- --Soap making
- --Sun drying food
- --Sustainable food production
- --Syrup making
- -- Threshing grain
- --Weaving
- --Wild native jams and jellies

EXHIBITS AND/OR LECTURES ON ...

- -- Aquaculture
- -- Conservation technology
- -- Environmentally sensitive agriculture production technologies
- --Forest
- --Farm/ranch antiques
- --Herbal medicine
- --Historical crafts
- --Irrigation, fertilizing, integrated pest management, soil conservation technologies
- -- Native plants
- -- Raising animals
- --Rural crafts (e.g., quilting, doll making, fruit baskets, baskets, toys, etc.)
- --Sustainable agriculture
- --Wildlife management

SITES FOR FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

- -- Anniversary festival—you name the occasion
- --Blossom festivals
- --Cultural festivals
- -- Country/Bluegrass/Gospel music festivals
- --Ethnic festivals
- -- Exhibitions of newborn farm animals
- --Harvest festivals
- --Historical events
- --Historical re-enactment
- --Rodeos

TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community (continued).

- --Rhubarb Festivals
- --Strawberry Festivals
- --Unique to area
- --Other events

FARM/RANCH/COMMUNITY ENTERTAINMENT

- --Bonfires
- --Clam bakes
- -- Dancing
- --Education
- --Guided nature walks
- --Hands on experiences—clays, face painting, wood making, plays
- --Hay/sleigh/tractor rides
- --Interactive games
- --Live historic interpretation
- -- Mystery theater
- --Participatory plays
- --Playhouses
- --Pumpkin carving
- -- Plays and concerts
- --Socials for dining
- --Story-telling

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

- --Binoculars/sighting scopes/tripods
- --Boats/canoes/kayaks/tubes
- -- Cross-country skis
- -- Camping equipment
- --Fishing equipment
- --Hunting/shooting equipment (e.g., dogs, blinds, and decoys)
- -- Laser tag equipment
- --Mountain bikes
- --Off road/all terrain vehicles
- -- Pack animals
- --Paint ball equipment
- --Snowmobiles
- --Snowshoes
- -- Toboggans/sleds

LESSONS

- --Archery
- -- Gardening
- --Canning
- --Cultural heritage
- --Country cooking
- -- Cider/wine making
- --Farm/ranch antiques
- --Food processing, preserving, smoking, canning

TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community (continued).

- --Fishing
- --Firearm shooting-range or skeet
- -- Game dressing
- --Historic restoration
- --Horseback riding
- --Hunting
- -- Making old-time toys, clothes, Christmas decorations-- Pumpkin carving
- --Sausage making
- --Whittling
- --Woodworking
- --Other arts and crafts

HOSPITALITY SERVICES

- -- Assisted living services
- --Bed & Breakfasts
- -- Cabin rentals
- -- Catered functions, e.g., weddings, reunions
- -- Child cares
- --Horse livery stables
- --Interpretative centers
- -- Meeting/banquet facilities
- --Pet hotels
- --Pet day care
- --Picnic/trail lunches
- --Restaurants serving dishes made from products produced on the farm/ranch or the wild
- --Storage units, boats, vehicles
- --Wagon Trains

ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISES (Non traditional production or value added marketing.)

- --Access to water bodies, natural areas, scenic sites, etc. for recreation, education, and/or research
- --Angora goats
- --Alpacas
- --Bait shops
- --Boarding, training, and care of horses and/or hunting dogs, cats, other pets
- --Clam farming
- -- Canning
- -- Canning/smoking/packaging/storing of food, fish, game
- -- Cricket farming
- --Dairy goats-milk, soap, meat
- --Game dressing—ducks, geese, pheasants, etc
- --Gift shops featuring arts and crafts made on the farm/ranch and/or in local area
- -- Grapes and by products—jellies, wreaths, wood, wine
- --Ground cover production
- --Guide service for hunting, fishing, pack trips, sightseeing, etc.
- --Farmers' markets
- --Hay sales
- --Horseback riding liveries
- --Jellies and jams from native wild berries
- --Lavender-fresh, decorated, dried, crushed
- --Nurseries-shrubs, annuals, nursery stock, etc
- --Organic vegetables, poultry, livestock

TABLE 1: Alternative and Agritourism Enterprises or Activities for the Farm, Ranch and Rural Community (continued).

- -- Pasture fed eggs of many different colors
- -- Pasture fed chickens
- -- Pasture fed turkeys
- --Pasture fed beef
- -- Pasture fed hogs
- --Pet stores selling animals raised on the farm/ranch
- --Pine straw sales
- --Rabbit
- --Sesame production for oil or condiment
- --Sod farming
- --Straw sales
- --Shrimp harvesting/farming
- -- Mushrooms—shiitake and others
- -- Taxidermist
- -- Tilapia fish farming
- --Roadside markets selling products produced on the farm/ranch (e.g., fruits, vegetables, nuts, cider, Christmas Trees, greenhouse plants, firewood, dressed game)
- --Vehicle spotting for hunters, anglers, canoeists, etc
- --Worm farming—bait, pet food and human consumption

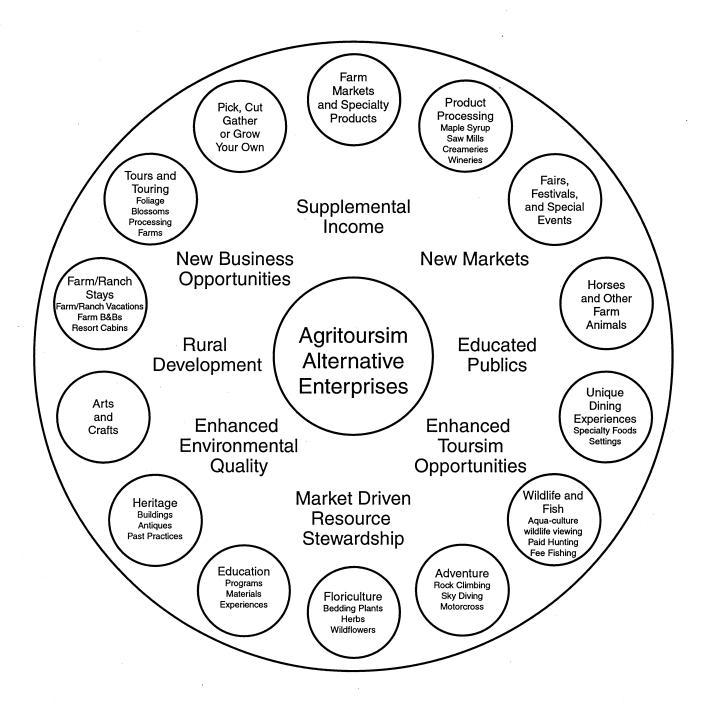


Figure 1: Agritourism Alternative Enterprises

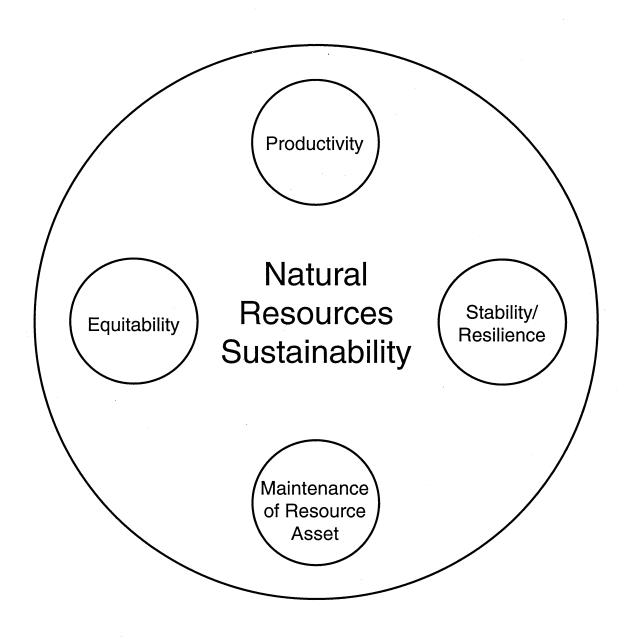


Figure 2: Natural Resources Sustainability

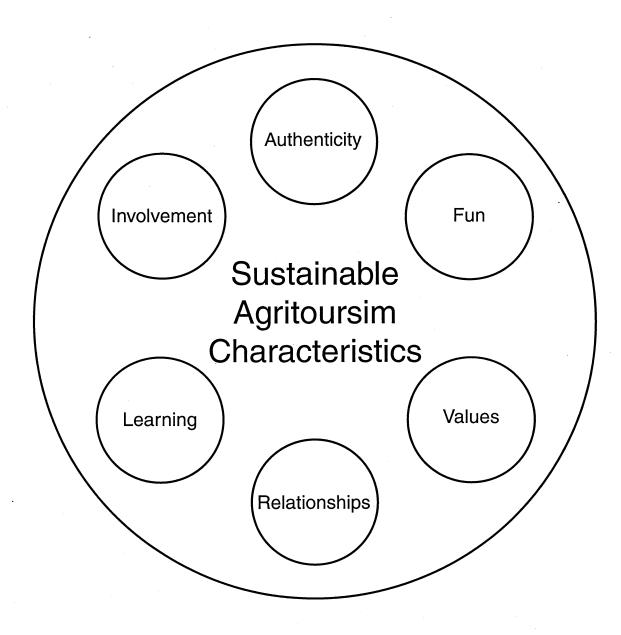


Figure 3: Characteristics of Sustainable Agritourism

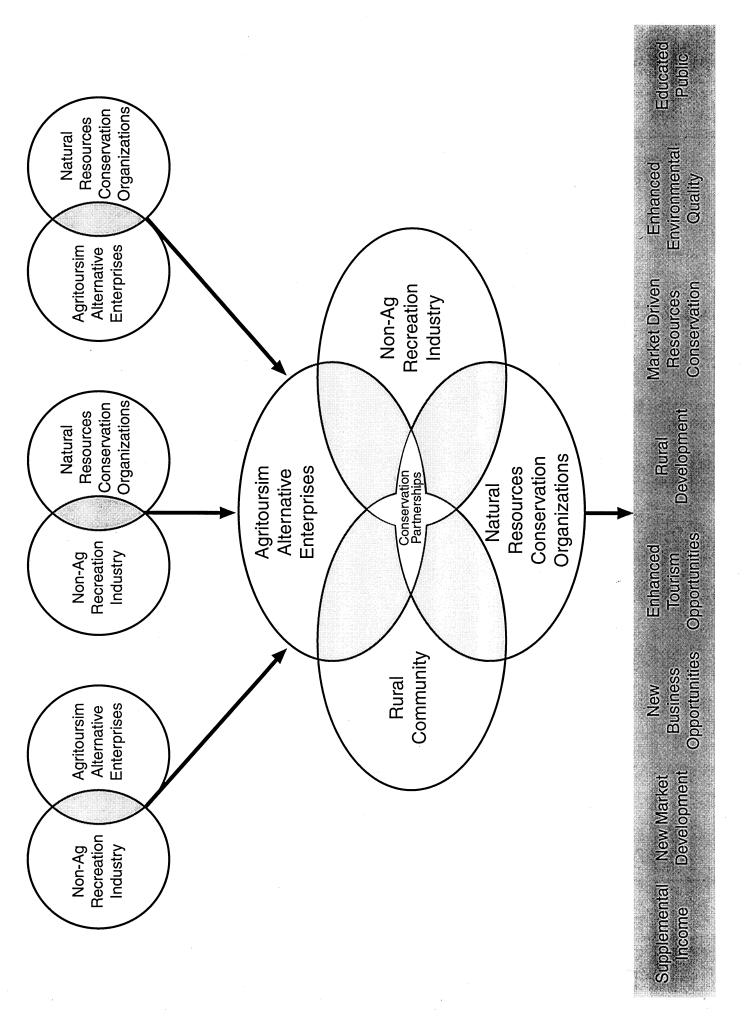


Figure 4: Mutual Conservation Interests Yield Partnerships and Rural Development



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This section hosts the directory of land-grant universities which are state partners of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service. Also included is the <u>CSREES Online Directory of Professional Workers in Agriculture</u>, the <u>State Extension Service Directors and Administrators Directory</u> as well as links to the websites of the schools of forestry, higher education, human sciences, veterinary science, and state extension services and state experiment stations.



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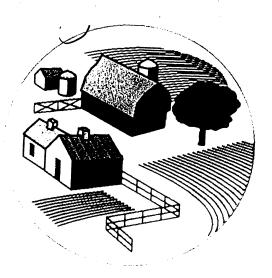
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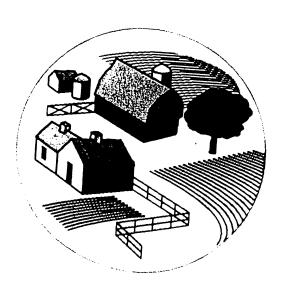












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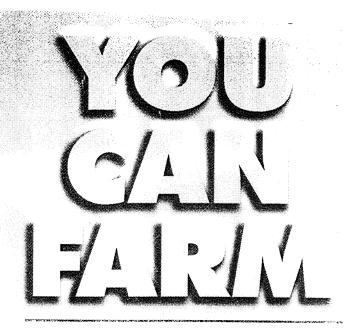
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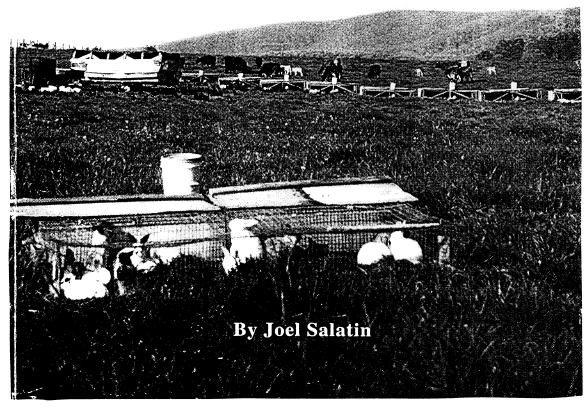
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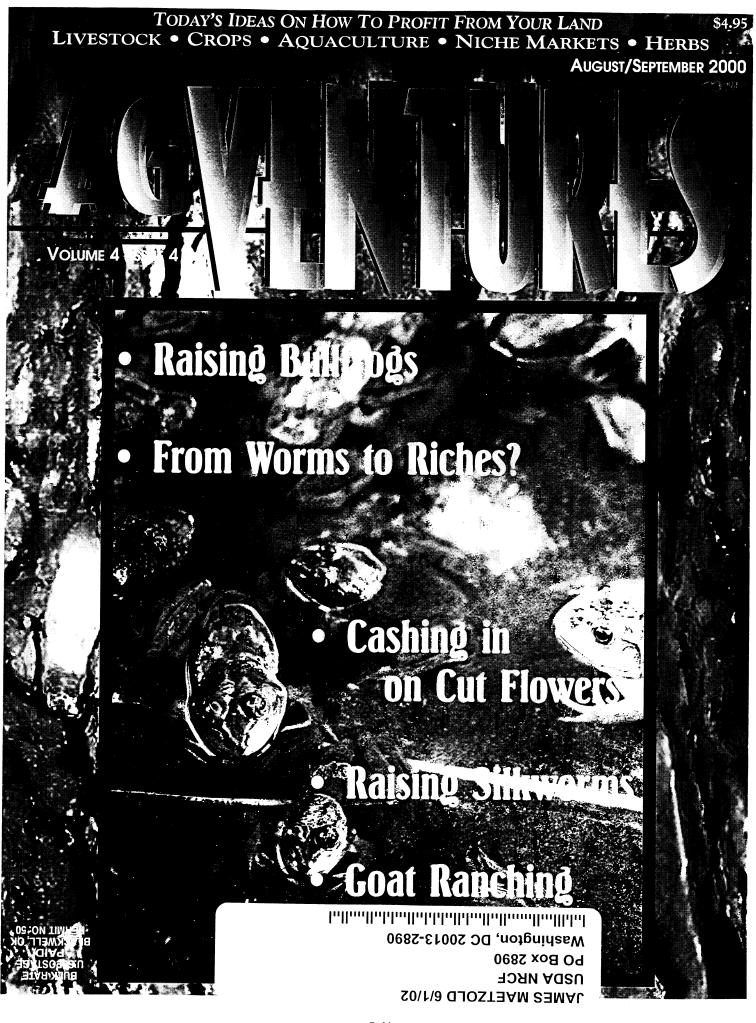
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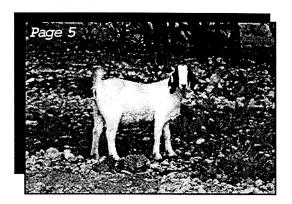
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ON THE COVER: (Clockwise from top left:)

- 1) A booth at a trade show can provide excellent marketing opportunities —page 27; photo by Paul Berg
- 2) Shepherd Bliss weaving boysenberry canes. —page 64; photo by Sandy Thompson
- 3) A five-abreast draft horse team cultivating corn at Horse Progress Days—page 57; photo by Paul Berg

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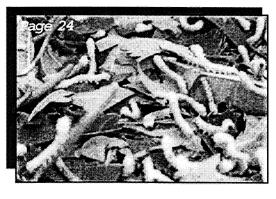




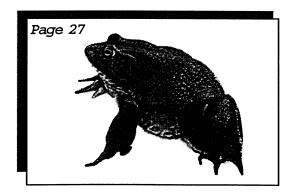
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- •Insects For Eating
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On the Cover: Captive raised bullfrogs at Rana Ranch Commercial Bullfrogs, owned by Steve and Lisa Rivas.



ALTERNATIVE ENTERPRISES AND AGRITOURISM RESOURCE MANUAL October 2000

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